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Notice Regarding Citation of these Laws

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The Florida "Little Miller Act"

Florida Statutes, Title XVIII, Public Lands and Property, Chapter 255, Public Property and Publicly Owned Buildings, Section 255.05

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255.05 Bond of contractor constructing public buildings; form; action by materialmen.—

(1)(a) Any person entering into a formal contract with the state or any county, city, or political subdivision thereof, or other public authority or private entity, for the construction of a public building, for the prosecution and completion of a public work, or for repairs upon a public building or public work shall be required, before commencing the work or before recommencing the work after a default or abandonment, to execute, deliver to the public owner, and record in the public records of the county where the improvement is located, a payment and performance bond with a surety insurer authorized to do business in this state as surety. A public entity may not require a contractor to secure a surety bond under this section from a specific agent or bonding company. The bond must state on its front page: the name, principal business address, and phone number of the contractor, the surety, the owner of the property being improved, and, if different from the owner, the contracting public entity; the contract number assigned by the contracting public entity; and a description of the project sufficient to identify it, such as a legal description or the street address of the property being improved, and a general description of the improvement. Such bond shall be conditioned upon the contractor's performance of the construction work in the time and manner prescribed in the contract and promptly making payments to all persons defined in s. 713.01 who furnish labor, services, or materials for the prosecution of the work provided for in the contract. Any claimant may apply to the governmental entity having charge of the work for copies of the contract and bond and shall thereupon be furnished with a certified copy of the contract and bond. The claimant shall have a right of action against the contractor and surety for the amount due him or her, including unpaid finance charges due under the claimant's contract. Such action shall not involve the public authority in any expense. When such work is done for the state and the contract is for \$100,000 or less, no payment and performance bond shall be required. At the discretion of the official or board awarding such contract when such work is done for any county, city, political subdivision, or public authority, any person entering into such a contract which is for \$200,000 or less may be exempted from executing the payment and performance bond. When such work is done for the state, the Secretary of Management Services may delegate to state agencies the authority to exempt any person entering into such a contract amounting to more than \$100,000 but less than \$200,000 from executing the payment and performance bond. In the event such exemption is granted, the officer or officials shall not be personally liable to persons suffering loss because of granting such exemption. The Department of Management Services shall maintain information on the number of requests by state agencies for delegation of authority to waive the bond

requirements by agency and project number and whether any request for delegation was denied and the justification for the denial. Any provision in a payment bond furnished for public work contracts as provided by this subsection which restricts the classes of persons as defined in s. 713.01 protected by the bond or the venue of any proceeding relating to such bond is unenforceable.

(b) The Department of Management Services shall adopt rules with respect to all contracts for \$200,000 or less, to provide:

1. Procedures for retaining up to 10 percent of each request for payment submitted by a contractor and procedures for determining disbursements from the amount retained on a pro rata basis to laborers, materialmen, and subcontractors, as defined in s. 713.01.
2. Procedures for requiring certification from laborers, materialmen, and subcontractors, as defined in s. 713.01, prior to final payment to the contractor that such laborers, materialmen, and subcontractors have no claims against the contractor resulting from the completion of the work provided for in the contract.

The state shall not be held liable to any laborer, materialman, or subcontractor for any amounts greater than the pro rata share as determined under this section.

(c)1. The amount of the bond shall equal the contract price, except that for a contract in excess of \$250 million, if the state, county, municipality, political subdivision, or other public entity finds that a bond in the amount of the contract price is not reasonably available, the public owner shall set the amount of the bond at the largest amount reasonably available, but not less than \$250 million.

2. For construction-management or design-build contracts, if the public owner does not include in the bond amount the cost of design or other nonconstruction services, the bond may not be conditioned on performance of such services or payment to persons furnishing such services. Notwithstanding paragraph (a), such a bond may exclude persons furnishing such services from the classes of persons protected by the bond.

(2)(a)1. If a claimant is no longer furnishing labor, services, or materials on a project, a contractor or the contractor's agent or attorney may elect to shorten the prescribed time in this paragraph within which an action to enforce any claim against a payment bond provided pursuant to this section may be commenced by recording in the clerk's office a notice in substantially the following form:

NOTICE OF CONTEST OF CLAIM AGAINST PAYMENT BOND

To: (Name and address of claimant)

You are notified that the undersigned contests your notice of nonpayment, dated _____, _____, and served on the undersigned on _____, _____, and that the time within which you may file suit to enforce your claim is limited to 60 days after the date of service of this notice.

DATED on _____, _____.

Signed: (Contractor or Attorney)

The claim of any claimant upon whom such notice is served and who fails to institute a suit to enforce his or her claim against the payment bond within 60 days after service of such notice shall be extinguished automatically. The clerk shall mail a copy of the notice of contest to the claimant at the address shown in the notice of nonpayment or most recent amendment thereto and shall certify to such service on the face of such notice and record the notice. Service is complete upon mailing.

2. A claimant, except a laborer, who is not in privity with the contractor shall, before commencing or not later than 45 days after commencing to furnish labor, services, or materials for the prosecution of the work, furnish the contractor with a written notice that he or she intends to look to the bond for protection. A claimant who is not in privity with the contractor and who has not received payment for his or her labor, services, or materials shall deliver to the contractor and to the surety written notice of the performance of the labor or delivery of the materials or supplies and of the nonpayment. The notice of nonpayment may be served at any time during the progress of the work or thereafter but not before 45 days after the first furnishing of labor, services, or materials, and not later than 90 days after the final furnishing of the labor, services, or materials by the claimant or, with respect to rental equipment, not later than 90 days after the date that the rental equipment was last on the job site available for use. Any notice of nonpayment served by a claimant who is not in privity with the contractor which includes sums for retainage must specify the portion of the amount claimed for retainage. No action for the labor, materials, or supplies may be instituted against the contractor or the surety unless both notices have been given. Notices required or permitted under this section may be served in accordance with s. 713.18. A claimant may not waive in advance his or her right to bring an action under the bond against the surety. In any action brought to enforce a claim against a payment bond under this section, the prevailing party is entitled to recover a reasonable fee for the services of his or her attorney for trial and appeal or for arbitration, in an amount to be determined by the court, which fee must be taxed as part of the prevailing party's costs, as allowed in equitable actions. The time periods for service of a notice of nonpayment or for bringing an action against a contractor or a surety shall be measured from the last day of furnishing labor, services, or materials by the claimant and shall not be measured by other standards, such as the issuance of a certificate of occupancy or the issuance of a certificate of substantial completion.

(b) When a person is required to execute a waiver of his or her right to make a claim against the payment bond in exchange for, or to induce payment of, a progress payment, the waiver may be in substantially the following form:

**WAIVER OF RIGHT TO CLAIM
AGAINST THE PAYMENT BOND
(PROGRESS PAYMENT)**

The undersigned, in consideration of the sum of \$_____, hereby waives its right to claim against the payment bond for labor, services, or materials furnished through (insert date) to (insert the name of your customer) on the job of (insert the name of the owner) , for improvements to the following described project:

(description of project)

This waiver does not cover any retention or any labor, services, or materials furnished after the date specified.

DATED ON _____, ____.

(Claimant)

By: _____

(c) When a person is required to execute a waiver of his or her right to make a claim against the payment bond, in exchange for, or to induce payment of, the final payment, the waiver may be in substantially the following form:

**WAIVER OF RIGHT TO CLAIM
AGAINST THE PAYMENT BOND (FINAL PAYMENT)**

The undersigned, in consideration of the final payment in the amount of \$_____, hereby waives its right to claim against the payment bond for labor, services, or materials furnished to (insert the name of your customer) on the job of (insert the name of the owner) , for improvements to the following described project:

(description of project)

DATED ON _____, ____.

(Claimant)

By: _____

(d) A person may not require a claimant to furnish a waiver that is different from the forms in paragraphs (b) and (c).

(e) A claimant who executes a waiver in exchange for a check may condition the waiver on payment of the check.

(f) A waiver that is not substantially similar to the forms in this subsection is enforceable in accordance with its terms.

(3) The bond required in subsection (1) may be in substantially the following form:

PUBLIC CONSTRUCTION BOND

Bond No. (enter bond number)

BY THIS BOND, We _____, as Principal and _____, a corporation, as Surety, are bound to _____, herein called Owner, in the sum of \$_____, for payment of which we bind ourselves, our heirs, personal representatives, successors, and assigns, jointly and severally.

THE CONDITION OF THIS BOND is that if Principal:

1. Performs the contract dated _____, _____, between Principal and Owner for construction of _____, the contract being made a part of this bond by reference, at the times and in the manner

prescribed in the contract; and

2. Promptly makes payments to all claimants, as defined in Section 255.05(1), Florida Statutes, supplying Principal with labor, materials, or supplies, used directly or indirectly by Principal in the prosecution of the work provided for in the contract; and

3. Pays Owner all losses, damages, expenses, costs, and attorney's fees, including appellate proceedings, that Owner sustains because of a default by Principal under the contract; and

4. Performs the guarantee of all work and materials furnished under the contract for the time specified in the contract, then this bond is void; otherwise it remains in full force.

Any action instituted by a claimant under this bond for payment must be in accordance with the notice and time limitation provisions in Section 255.05(2), Florida Statutes.

Any changes in or under the contract documents and compliance or noncompliance with any formalities connected with the contract or the changes does not affect Surety's obligation under this bond.

DATED ON _____, _____.

(Name of Principal)

By (As Attorney in Fact)

(Name of Surety)

(4) The payment bond provisions of all bonds required by subsection (1) shall be construed and deemed statutory payment bonds furnished pursuant to this section and such bonds shall not under any circumstances be converted into common law bonds.

(5) In addition to the provisions of chapter 47, any action authorized under this section may be brought in the county in which the public building or public work is being constructed or repaired. This subsection shall not apply to an action instituted prior to May 17, 1977.

(6) All payment bond forms used by a public owner and all payment bonds executed pursuant to this section by a surety shall make reference to this section by number and shall contain reference to the notice and time limitation provisions in subsection (2).

(7) In lieu of the bond required by this section, a contractor may file with the state, county, city, or other political authority an alternative form of security in the form of cash, a money order, a certified check, a cashier's check, an irrevocable letter of credit, or a security of a type listed in part II of chapter 625. Any such alternative form of security shall be for the same purpose and be subject to the same conditions as those applicable to the bond required by this section. The determination of the value of an alternative form of security shall be made by the appropriate state, county, city, or other political subdivision.

(8) When a contractor has furnished a payment bond pursuant to this section, he or she may, when the state, county, municipality, political subdivision, or other public authority makes any payment to the contractor or directly to a claimant, serve a written demand on any claimant who is not in privity with the contractor for a written statement under oath of his or her account showing the nature of the labor or services performed and to be performed, if any; the materials furnished; the materials to be furnished, if known; the amount paid on account to date; the

amount due; and the amount to become due, if known, as of the date of the statement by the claimant. Any such demand to a claimant who is not in privity with the contractor must be served on the claimant at the address and to the attention of any person who is designated to receive the demand in the notice to contractor served by the claimant. The failure or refusal to furnish the statement does not deprive the claimant of his or her rights under the bond if the demand is not served at the address of the claimant or directed to the attention of the person designated to receive the demand in the notice to contractor. The failure to furnish the statement within 30 days after the demand, or the furnishing of a false or fraudulent statement, deprives the claimant who fails to furnish the statement, or who furnishes the false or fraudulent statement, of his or her rights under the bond. If the contractor serves more than one demand for statement of account on a claimant and none of the information regarding the account has changed since the claimant's last response to a demand, the failure or refusal to furnish such statement does not deprive the claimant of his or her rights under the bond. The negligent inclusion or omission of any information deprives the claimant of his or her rights under the bond to the extent that the contractor can demonstrate prejudice from such act or omission by the claimant. The failure to furnish a response to a demand for statement of account does not affect the validity of any claim on the bond being enforced in a lawsuit filed before the date the demand for statement of account is received by the claimant.

(9) On any public works project for which the public authority requires a performance and payment bond, suits at law and in equity may be brought and maintained by and against the public authority on any contract claim arising from breach of an express provision or an implied covenant of a written agreement or a written directive issued by the public authority pursuant to the written agreement. In any such suit, the public authority and the contractor shall have all of the same rights and obligations as a private person under a like contract except that no liability may be based on an oral modification of either the written contract or written directive. Nothing herein shall be construed to waive the sovereign immunity of the state and its political subdivisions from equitable claims and equitable remedies. The provisions of this subsection shall apply only to contracts entered into on or after July 1, 1999.

(10) An action, except an action for recovery of retainage, must be instituted against the contractor or the surety on the payment bond or the payment provisions of a combined payment and performance bond within 1 year after the performance of the labor or completion of delivery of the materials or supplies. An action for recovery of retainage must be instituted against the contractor or the surety within 1 year after the performance of the labor or completion of delivery of the materials or supplies; however, such an action may not be instituted until one of the following conditions is satisfied:

(a) The public entity has paid out the claimant's retainage to the contractor, and the time provided under s. 218.735 or s. 255.073(3) for payment of that retainage to the claimant has expired;

(b) The claimant has completed all work required under its contract and 70 days have passed since the contractor sent its final payment request to the public entity; or

(c) At least 160 days have passed since reaching substantial completion of the construction services purchased, as defined in the contract, or if not defined in the contract, since reaching beneficial occupancy or use of the project.

(d) The claimant has asked the contractor, in writing, for any of the following information and the contractor has failed to respond to the claimant's request, in writing, within 10 days after receipt of the request:

1. Whether the project has reached substantial completion, as that term is defined in the contract, or if not defined in the contract, if beneficial occupancy or use of the project has occurred.
2. Whether the contractor has received payment of the claimant's retainage, and if so, the date the retainage was received by the contractor.
3. Whether the contractor has sent its final payment request to the public entity, and if so, the date on which the final payment request was sent.

If none of the conditions described in paragraph (a), paragraph (b), paragraph (c), or paragraph (d) is satisfied and an action for recovery of retainage cannot be instituted within the 1-year limitation period set forth in this subsection, this limitation period shall be extended until 120 days after one of these conditions is satisfied.

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